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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5201
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1140
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9907
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4339
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1802
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3535
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0509
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7006
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4625
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0912
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0916
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0639
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2865
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0517
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001436

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/24/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: REGIME CONTINUES TO DETAIN OPPOSITION
LEADERS

REF: RANGOON 1432

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Classified By: P/E Chief Leslie Hayden for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: 88 Generation Student leaders Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, and Htay Kywe remain in detention today at a Police Special Branch office in Rangoon. Min Ko Naing has been in contact with members of his group and communicated that he is being pressured to sign statements about the regime's National Convention process and to refrain from future political activities. He has urged the 88 Generation Students to remain calm and keep a low profile for the time being. The 88 Generation Students' second-line leadership is meeting and making plans for all scenarios, including choosing new leaders who will take over if their three current leaders are arrested or detained for a long period of time. End Summary.

12. (C) Police Special Branch continues to detain 88 Generation Student leaders Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, and Htay Kywe. We have heard that the authorities have moved all three leaders to the Eight-Mile office of the Home Affairs Ministry's Special Branch. Authorities contacted their families today and asked them to bring in clean clothes and toiletries for them, a sign that they may not be released soon. The student leaders have not been formally charged. According to an 88 Generation member close to the leadership, Min Ko Naing called a close colleague in Mandalay today and relayed that he had been asked to sign a document regarding his stance on the National Convention and his attitude about the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). He also passed a message that he wants the 88 Generation Students to remain calm and cautious for now. More ominous rumors are circulating among Burma-based media that the regime may soon charge all three with terrorism.

13. (C) On the evening of September 27, sixty leaders of the 88 Generation Students and the NLD, and diplomats from the U.S., Australia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Korea, Japan and the U.K. gathered at the Charge's residence for a previously-scheduled concert. The detention of the three leaders was the primary talk of the event. The Student leaders told us they were very grateful to be included as it gave them an opportunity to see old friends in the diplomatic corps and become better acquainted with those with whom they do not have regular contact. Additionally, it offered the students a safe venue to confer amongst themselves and with their NLD colleagues.

14. (C) This morning at 10:30 local time, the 88 Generation officers met and chose interim leaders if Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, and Htay Kywe are arrested or detained for a long period of time. The organization does not want to lose the momentum it has built up over the last year. After another late afternoon meeting, the 88 Generation Students plan to issue a statement focusing on how the detention of their leaders has set back the cause of "national reconciliation" that the regime claims to be pursuing. We received press inquiries from "Irrawaddy" and other media today about the U.S. position on the students' detention and responded using today's EAP press guidance.

15. (C) According to several accounts, other members of the organization are now facing additional scrutiny. Three former political prisoners who are students at the American Center were followed home after they left the Center last night, a first for them. Authorities recently questioned a former student activist, who is now a lawyer and a English teacher in Bago, about his relationship with the local NLD MP-elect, as well as a colleague with whom he is working to

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promote human rights education in rural areas. Many student activists are hiding out in various places and avoiding their homes.

16. (C) Comment: We are working with other interested embassies, including Australia, Japan, South Korea, the U.K., Germany, and Canada, to closely monitor the developing situation, and are keeping in close contact with the 88 Students Group. The regime's detentions and blatant attempts to intimidate the 88 Generation leaders again highlights the regime's tactic of using fear and threat to muzzle democracy and stifle those seeking to bring people together in Burma. These actions, foolishly launched on the eve of Friday's UNSC briefing on Burma, demonstrate once again that the regime is more interested in intimidation than in reconciliation. End Comment.
STOLTZ